

---



**Texas Department of Health**  
The Commissioner's Report to the Board of Health

November 30, 2001

**TDH Hot Topics**



**TDH Responds to 400 plus Anthrax/Bioterrorism.**

TDH has responded to more than 400 calls related to anthrax or bioterrorism since September 11. During the last week, three suspicious letters have been brought from the Texas Capitol to the TDH lab for testing. All were negative. The Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Surveillance Division reports that while some calls were from the public, many were from local law enforcement and health care providers requesting guidance regarding how to handle or test suspicious packages and substances or test and treat people with possible exposures of anthrax. Information has been faxed, e-mailed and mailed to physicians, nurses, hospitals, veterinarians, and laboratorians, including six fax alerts to more than 2400 individuals/entities, two e-mail alerts to more than 10,000 health care professionals, and two mail outs to over 1600 healthcare workers. The Bioterrorism Web page has been enhanced to include guidance protocols for physicians, hospitals, and law enforcement and hazmat personnel. (<http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/bioterrorism/default.htm>) For more information, contact Julie Rawlings, Infectious Disease Epidemiology & Surveillance Division, at (512) 458-7676 or e-mail [julie.rawlings@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:julie.rawlings@tdh.state.tx.us).



**TDH Closes Austin Goat Cheese Company.**

An Austin company that makes goat cheese has been shut down by TDH due to unsafe food processing conditions. A hearing on the closing is scheduled for December 12. On November 9, Commissioner of Health signed an emergency order prohibiting the company from operating as a food manufacturer. The action was taken after TDH inspectors repeatedly found violations of state laws and regulations including fly infestation; dead flies on blocks of cheese; storing raw goat milk in buckets that had been used to feed animals, using untested water from a well that was not properly sealed; cheese wrapped in old rags and a pillow case; and a dead goat and three sick goats in a pen close to the cheese production area. The company has failed to correct deficiencies identified in numerous inspections and has been operating without a food manufacturer's license. For more information, contact Derek Jakovich, Licensing and Enforcement Division, Bureau of Food and Drug Safety, at (512) 719-0222 or e-mail [derek.jakovich@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:derek.jakovich@tdh.state.tx.us).



**TDH Warns Employees who Received Suspect Turkeys.**

On November 21, TDH conducted an investigation of 1,050 turkeys given as gifts to employees by Dallas Woodcraft Company and home Interiors and Gifts of Carrollton. The investigation was launched when several people contacted the City of Carrollton Health Department to report that the Gift turkeys were smoked by Texas Lil's Dude Ranch near Justin, northwest of Dallas. TDH alerted the media to warn employees, who may not have been reached by the companies directly, not to eat the turkeys since undercooked poultry could contain harmful bacteria. For more information, contact Frank Borden, Manufactured Foods Division at (512) 719-0243 or e-mail [frank.borden@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:frank.borden@tdh.state.tx.us)



### **Product Safety Division Conducts “Toy Sweep 2001” to Identify Recalled Children’s Toys.**

The TDH Product Safety Division and four public health regions participated in the annual Toy Sweep, November 15-20. More than 147 recalled toys were discovered in participating cities. The Toy Sweep is a four-day campaign to educate retailers and remind consumers that certain items have been recalled due to a specific hazard or defect, and are not safe for children. The Toy Sweep focused on ten recalled children’s toys that make up a "10 Most Wanted" list for Product Safety Division inspectors. Each fall, before the big holiday shopping season, inspectors visit retail stores to give retailers detailed information about each of the recalled items, and to make sure that recalled toys are no longer available on store shelves. Toy Sweep is generally very successful in raising awareness among store retailers of the need to pay close attention to the product recall notice issued by toy manufacturers. In addition, Product Safety staff also participate in interviews with newspaper, television, and radio stations to raise public awareness about recalled children’s products in order to reduce the risk of injury or death, and to encourage people who find what they believe are dangerous, defective or mislabeled toys to contact the TDH Product Safety Division. Toy Sweep 2001 is scheduled for Nov. 15, 16, 19 and 20 in the Austin, Dallas/Fort Worth, El Paso, Houston, Lubbock and San Antonio areas. The results of the Toy Sweep will be provided at the Board of Health meeting held in January. *For more information, contact Annabelle Dillard, Product Safety Division, at (512) 834-6773, ext. 2270 or e-mail [annabelle.dillard@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:annabelle.dillard@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Campus Security.**

The Bureau of Resource Management (BRM) is proceeding with the security proposal approved by upper management. Twenty-four hour, seven day a week security guards have been put in place. The primary security system contract has been awarded and the contractor has completed the installation of cameras inside and outside of the buildings on the main campus. ID cards have been issued to all central Austin employees. BRM is proceeding with instituting a new access card/employee identification system that will assist in establishing a more controlled access environment. BRM has also reconfigured the security guard station at the main entrance to contain a monitoring station to monitor cameras on campus. A new guard station has been built at the Moreton Building entrance. On September 11, TDH instituted controlled access for all of the buildings at the TDH headquarters campus. Open public access points are provided at the main entrances of BVS, Moreton Building, G Building, AV Library, Warehouse and Central Purchasing. At all other access points, admission to and exit from the buildings is controlled by the computerized card access system. Issuance of new access cards with integrated photo ID was started the first week in October and will be completed soon. *For more information, contact John Burlinson, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 7738 or e-mail [john.burlinson@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:john.burlinson@tdh.state.tx.us).*

## **Other Hot Topics**



### **Botulism.**

The Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Surveillance Division (IDEAS) and Regions 2/3 staff, in conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA), have been continuing the investigation of botulism in persons who consumed frozen chili in late August. Currently, the number of cases stands at 15, including 3 children. Ten of these patients are still hospitalized. One of the cases was not a member of the church group that was the focus of the initial investigation, although he did consume a product purchased at the same distributor's store. Case finding continues and includes investigation of cases with diagnoses other

than botulism that could possibly have been misdiagnosed. *For more information, contact Linda Gaul, Infectious Disease Epidemiology & Surveillance Division, at (512) 458-7676 or e-mail [linda.gaul@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:linda.gaul@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **HHSAS/PeopleSoft.**

The HHSAS Financial System has been fully operational for 3 months. During the months from September 1 to October 31, the HHSAS system has processed more than 77,500 vouchers, has paid a total amount exceeding \$1,255,145,000, and has successfully processed and paid over 93% of voucher transactions. As with any large-scale implementation of a new system many issues are being addressed including the conversion of massive amounts of data from the legacy system to HHSAS. Because transactions are now processed differently, some problems have occurred, including a slow down in voucher payments. Despite some problems TDH is successfully processing and paying over 93% of all transactions sent to the HHSAS system. The transaction processing issues that are currently being experienced by TDH are related more to the natural learning curve rather than system inadequacies. Phase 2 of the HHSAS/Human Resource Management System (HRMS) will involve the Human Resource area. The modules scheduled to go into production will be, Time and Labor, Payroll, Time and Leave, and Human Resources. The go live date for Phase 2 is scheduled for December 31, 2002. *For more information, contact Linda Schirpik, Administrative Systems Project, at (512) 458-7503 or e-mail [linda.schirpik@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:linda.schirpik@tdh.state.tx.us).*

## **Disease Outbreaks**



### **Enterics.**

IDEAS staff members have been assisting Regions 2/3 staff in an investigation of an outbreak of gastroenteritis that affected 14 of 35 residents of a nursing home. Symptomology is suggestive of Norwalk-like virus infection, but laboratory results have not yet identified a pathogen. Two patients were hospitalized and all have recovered. *For more information, contact Linda Gaul, Infectious Disease Epidemiology & Surveillance Division, at (512) 458-7676 or e-mail [linda.gaul@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:linda.gaul@tdh.state.tx.us).*

## **Media Campaign**



### **Duck Days.**

Kickoff events for “Duck Days” were held in Houston and Beaumont/Port Arthur on November 12–16. Participants included Congressman Gene Green, Houston City Councilman Gabriel Vasquez, and Beaumont Mayor David Moore. Activities included the announcement of the winner of a youth tobacco-free essay contest, and unveiling of an “El mundo sin tabaco” (A week without Tobacco) sculpture by kids. *For more information, contact Diana Condon, Office of Tobacco Prevention and Control, at (512) 458-7402 or e-mail [diana.condon@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:diana.condon@tdh.state.tx.us).*

## **Key Reports**



### **Tuberculosis Statistics.**

On average, an 8% decrease occurred each year from 1995-2000 in the number of TB cases reported. For the time period January 1 through September 30, 2001, there has been a 13% increase in the number of cases reported compared with the same time period in 2000. In addition, Dallas County is experiencing a 45% increase in the number of cases reported for this time period compared with last year. These numbers are preliminary and

may not reflect the same trend at year's end. *For more information, contact Gail Shevick, TB Elimination Division, at (512) 458-7447 or e-mail [gail.shevick@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:gail.shevick@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Influenza.**

The TDH Laboratory has identified or received reports of 3 culture confirmed influenza cases since surveillance for influenza began September 30. Two are influenza A (H3N2) and were isolated from patients in Dallas and Collin Counties. Influenza B was cultured from the third case, a child from Travis County. All three isolates have been referred to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for further examination. Preliminary analyses indicate a good match between the 2001-2002 vaccine and these strains. Delays in production and delivery of vaccine may impact large community flu vaccination campaigns. The CDC has repeated last year's recommendations for vaccinating those at highest risk from complications of the flu first. *For more information, contact Neil Pascoe, Infectious Disease Epidemiology & Surveillance Division, at (512) 458-7676 or e-mail [neil.pascoe@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:neil.pascoe@tdh.state.tx.us).*

## **TDH Program Updates**



### ***Haemophilus influenzae* type b case confirmed.**

The first case of invasive *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) has been confirmed in San Antonio. The 9 month old-child had been fully vaccinated with Hib does at 2, 4, and 7 months of age, but had a history of debilitating health conditions. This Hispanic male had a history of pneumonia, respiratory infections, and ongoing steroid therapy. He was born at 32 weeks gestation and has subsequently been hospitalized 3 times and intubated twice. The consult notes mention suspected underlying congenital bronchiectasis or other chronic lung disease. A blood culture grew both *Haemophilus influenzae* type b and coagulase negative *Staphylococcus*. The infant was hospitalized for 10 days and recovered. *For more information, contact Laura Tabony or David Bastis, Immunization Division, Surveillance and Epidemiology Program, at (512) 458-7284 or e-mail [laura.tabony@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:laura.tabony@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Stakeholder Meeting.**

The Texas Council on Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke held a stakeholder meeting November 15, to solicit community input on Council activities. *For more information, contact Jennifer Smith, Cardiovascular Health and Wellness at (512) 458-7670 or e-mail [jennifer.smith@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jennifer.smith@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Algorithms.**

The Texas Diabetes Council has recently approved 4 new treatment algorithms to help Texas physicians improve their care of diabetes patients. The new algorithms address: Pharmacologic Algorithm for Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in Adults; Exercise algorithm for Impaired Fasting Glucose/Type 2 Diabetes Prevention and Therapy; Hypertension Algorithm for Diabetes Mellitus in Adults; Lipid Treatment Algorithm for Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in Adults. *For more information, contact Jan Ozias, Texas Diabetes Program/ Council, at (512) 458-7490 or e-mail [jan.ozias@tdh.sate.tx.us](mailto:jan.ozias@tdh.sate.tx.us).*



### **Hepatitis C.**

The hepatitis C staff coordinated and facilitated the quarterly meeting of the Hepatitis C State Workgroup. Approximately 40 persons attended. The featured guest speaker, Robin Chandler of Representative Glen Maxey's office, presented information on the hepatitis bills passed during the legislative session. TDH staff presented the new TV and radio hepatitis C prevention advertisements targeting young African-American males (ages 14-

19), the new TDH slogan/logo “Don’t Get Stuck With Hepatitis C,” and corresponding posters. TDH staff also presented information on the regulation of tattoo studios; lab results from counseling and testing sites, and other information on hepatitis C. *For more information, contact Gary Heseltine, Infectious Disease Epidemiology & Surveillance Division, at (512) 458-7676 or e-mail [gary.heseltine@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:gary.heseltine@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Bi-national Health Conference.**

On October 14-16, staff from the TB Elimination Division attended a Bi-national Tuberculosis Workshop held in El Paso. A representative from the office of United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, and Mexico's Secretary of Health, initiated official discussions to develop and implement a system for sharing tuberculosis case management information across the United States-Mexico border including a bi-national TB card. Participants at the workshop met in small groups to discuss various aspects of the development and implementation of the information sharing system. *For more information, contact Charles Wallace, TB Elimination Division, at (512) 458-7447 or e-mail [charles.wallace@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:charles.wallace@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Tuberculosis Case Management.**

The TB Education Center (TBEC) developed a Nurse TB Case Management Curriculum/Course to enhance the capacity for nurse case management. The curriculum/course has enabled the TBEC to initiate a uniform statewide approach to TB care, with each case assigned to an individual nurse case manager. This approach will allow Texas to have a statewide, standardized system dependent on nurse case management, which would assure the quality of care. The course is designed to provide an in-depth coverage of the evaluation, treatment and case management of medically and psychosocially difficult to treat patients and is designed to go beyond the basic TB curriculum and enhance the participant’s ability to be accountable for all facets of case management by capturing the experience and competencies of expert TB public health nurses now working in field settings throughout Texas. This conference targets nurses, program managers and those who assist them in their duties as TB case managers. This workshop includes lecture presentations, case scenarios and participant breakout sessions. Nursing Continuing Education Credits are available to participants. During the first part of 2001, the course has been presented to a total of 103 participants in Public Health Regions 8, 7, and 11. The course will be presented in Dallas in November. *For more information, contact Stephanie Ott, TB Education Center, at (210) 534-8857, ext. 2227 or e-mail [stephanie.ott@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:stephanie.ott@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Corpus Christi/Nueces County Cancer Cluster Investigation.**

The Texas Cancer Registry completed the investigation of suspected cancer excesses in the Corpus Christi/Nueces County area. Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz on behalf of Ms. Suzie Canales of Citizens formally requested this investigation for Environmental Justice. There were no consistent patterns of cancer excesses that supported suspected environmental concerns. *For more information, contact Dr. Melanie Williams, at (512) 458-7523 or e-mail [melanie.williams@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:melanie.williams@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Texas Folic Acid Council (TFAC).**

Changes in priorities at the National March of Dimes has led to a request from their president to transition the lead on state folic acid councils to state health departments. TDH staffs, already actively involved in TFAC, are working on plans to transition these activities to oversight by the Perinatal Health Program in the Bureau of Women's Health. TDH staff from other divisions and bureaus, and representatives from collaborators, will

continue to be actively involved in TFAC activities. *For more information contact Amy Case, Texas Birth Defects Monitoring Division, at (512) 458-7232 or e-mail [amy.case@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:amy.case@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **HIV/AIDS Surveillance 2001 Supplemental Grant 00005B.**

The HIV/STD Epidemiology Division was informed that an application to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct the *Expanded HIV Risk Assessment for HIV/AIDS Surveillance (EHRAP) Project* was approved and funded for over \$84,000. The study will focus on record reviews in one or two public health regions in Texas to gather additional risk information on sampled, recent HIV and AIDS cases in the area. *For more information, contact Sharon K. Melville, HIV/STD Epidemiology Division, at (512) 490-2545 or e-mail [sharon.melville@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:sharon.melville@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **HIV Prevention Counseling.**

The Bureau of HIV and STD Prevention received notification from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that it was awarded \$250,000 for two years to develop and evaluate tools to improve the quality of HIV prevention counseling. Texas will be the only recipient of funds for this project. The CDC will visit TDH in November to plan for project implementation. *For more information, contact Sharon K. Melville, HIV/STD Epidemiology Division, at (512) 490-2545 or e-mail [sharon.melville@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:sharon.melville@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **Hepatitis C Virus.**

HIV/STD Epidemiology Division staff made a presentation on the first year of Hepatitis C counseling and testing to the Statewide Hepatitis C Advisory Group. From September 2000 through August 2001, more than 11,000 clients workgroup tested for HCV, and more than 2,000 were counseled but not tested. The overall positivity rate for the first year was 32.2 positives per 100 specimen submitted for testing. Most of the HCV positive clients had injected drugs. *For more information, contact Sharon K. Melville, HIV/STD Epidemiology Division, at (512) 490-2545 or e-mail [sharon.melville@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:sharon.melville@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **Restructuring.**

A restructure of HIV services planning occurring over the past months has resulted in the creation of seven new geographical designations and seven new planning assemblies, which replace the 26 HIV Care Consortia formerly responsible for HIV services planning. The Consortia have been dissolved in order to allow the new service planning assemblies to assume the responsibility for HIV services planning. *For more information, contact Casey S. Blass, HIV/STD Health Resources Division, at (512) 490-2515 or e-mail [casey.blass@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:casey.blass@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **Vaccine supply.**

Vaccine supply continues to be a problem for Texas as well as for the nation. TDH continues to have delays receiving vaccine orders for DTaP, PCV7, MMR and Varicella vaccines. The shortage for Td continues as well. *For more information, contact Judi Chase, Immunization Division, Vaccine Management Section, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 6266, or e-mail [judi.chase@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:judi.chase@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **Registry Marketing Activities.**

Staff of the ImmTrac Program and the Immunization Division participated in several recent health awareness promotional events. The children's retail store, Babies R'Us, invited the Texas immunization registry to exhibit at their in-store health fair during several weekends. Staff informed the general public about the importance of vaccines

and the registry and offered an opportunity to enroll children in the state's immunization registry. Staff also participated in the Hispanic Heritage Committee's Dieciseis de Septiembre event held at the main campus targeting TDH employees and distributing ImmTrac literature and answering questions about the registry. An exhibit was displayed at the faith-based health fair sponsored by an Austin area neighborhood church and included over sixty health professionals and agencies. Staff distributed literature and addressed questions about the registry. In addition to participation at promotional events, ImmTrac submitted two articles for publication in the Refugio County Advantage Press and TDH's UpShot publication. Both articles provided a description of the program, telephone and fax numbers, and a website address to obtain information about the registry. *For more information, contact Pat Feagin, Immunization Division, at (512) 458-7284, ext. 6323, or e-mail [pat.feagin@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:pat.feagin@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **Institute of Medicine Workshop.**

The national Institute of Medicine held a workshop on October 12--supported by the National Immunization Program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention--at the Texas Medical Association in Austin. This workshop was the second in a series of meetings focused on the IOM report "*Calling the Shots*" which was published last year. Commissioner of Health; President of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center; state representatives; and other key public and private health professionals representing the interests of immunization initiatives in Texas attended the workshop. *For more information, contact Jan Pelosi, Immunization Division, at (512) 458-7284, ext. 6423, or e-mail [jan.pelosi@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jan.pelosi@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **Denton Genetics Testing Center.**

The Denton Genetics Testing Center was closed October 26 as part of the plan to consolidate TDH laboratories. Two types of testing that had been performed in the Denton laboratory were moved to Austin. One type is to confirm and attempt to identify the genotype of sickle cell, phenylketonuria, galactosemia or congenital adrenal hyperplasia in newborns that are found positive for one of these disorders. The other type is prenatal screening for neural tube defect, Downs Syndrome and Trisomy 18 by blood analysis. These laboratory tests are being performed in the former Railroad Commission building at 2801 Wheless Lane until the new laboratory building is completed. *For more information, contact Eldridge T. Hutcheson, Biochemistry and Genetics Division at (512) 458-7430 or e-mail [eldridge.hutcheson@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:eldridge.hutcheson@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **Radiological Defense Program (RADEF).**

Radiological defense training and radiation survey meter calibration duties are performed by staff assigned to the Bureau of Radiation Control (BRC). The program was established 30 years ago as a training and instrumentation program for response to nuclear attack and now provides radiological instrument and training support to city, county and volunteer emergency response organizations. The recent attack on the World Trade Center (WTC) has placed most emergency response organizations on high alert due to concerns about potential radiological, biological or chemical consequences from terrorist actions. All but six states did away with their Radiological Defense programs and instrumentation years ago when the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) cancelled its program. Some states retained an instrument maintenance capability and some, like Texas, also conduct training for first responders and emergency management staff. Since the WTC attack, BRC has received a request for instruments from the local emergency management organization in San Diego, California. Other inquiries about instrument availability have been received from FEMA and other states. Local law enforcement, fire department and ambulance personnel form the core of first

responders to any accident involving a threat to public health or property. First responders are the first on the scene to identify the threat, protect health and safety, and secure the scene for recovery efforts. As the first line of defense they must be prepared to respond to a variety of hazards including radioactive materials. For these events, they rely on the support of the RADEF program. The program must service each of the instrument sets stored in city and county facilities across the state, over a four-year cycle in order to assure local organizations have operable radiation detection equipment. *For more information, contact Bob Free, Bureau of Radiation Control, at (512) 834-6688 ext. 2022 or e-mail [robert.free@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:robert.free@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Mammography Conference.**

The Bureau of Radiation Control hosted a Mammography Conference at the J.J. Pickle Center in Austin on October 20, through a funding grant from the TDH Breast and Cervical Cancer Program. Over 500 mammography technologists, medical physicists and TDH staff attended. Several nationally recognized speakers in the field of mammography made presentations at the event. *For more information, contact Ruth McBurney, Bureau of Radiation Control, at (512) 834-6689 or e-mail [ruth.mcburney@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:ruth.mcburney@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Meat Safety Assurance Division.**

The Meat Safety Assurance Division, through an Agreed Order, assessed an administrative penalty of \$6,250 against a firm for violating Health and Safety Code, Chapter 433. The firm removed, or caused to be removed, “Texas Retain” tags, which had been placed on beef carcasses by a department inspector, because cooling unit condensation contaminated the carcasses. Two retain tags were removed and the contaminated carcasses were processed and shipped in violation of Chapter 433.030(c). The Agreed Order requires the firm to pay \$1,250 of the administrative penalty to the department and apply the remaining \$5,000 toward repairs of the facility to help prevent future contamination of carcasses. *For more information, contact Lee Jan, Director, Meat Safety Assurance Division, at (512) 719-0205 or e-mail [lee.jan@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:lee.jan@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Federal Legislation.**

Congresswoman Susan Davis (CA) introduced two bills to Congress on October 9 relating to the regulation of dietary supplements. House Resolution (HR) 3065 entitled, “Dietary Supplement Information Act” proposes to amend the Federal Food Drug and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA) to require submission to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reports on adverse experiences regarding dietary supplements. HR3066 entitled, “Ephedrine Alkaloid Consumer Protection Act” proposes to amend the FFDCA to establish labeling and advertising requirements for dietary supplements containing ephedrine. It is apparent from the wording of HR3066, that the rules created by the Texas Department of Health to address this same issue were used as a template for this document. *For more information, contact Karen Tannert, Drugs and Medical Devices Division, at (512) 719-0237, ext. 496 or e-mail [karen.tannert@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:karen.tannert@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Technical Training for Metroplex Law Enforcement.**

On October 16 & 17, two investigators from the Enforcement & Investigations Program, Bureau of Licensing & Compliance, Associateship for Consumer Health Protection, presented a training program for law enforcement representatives in Richardson. Chief Investigator and Senior Investigator conducted training classes for the Fort Worth Police Academy and Richardson Police Department's Criminal Investigations Division. Over twenty officers and command staff attended the training sessions. An overview of the TDH Massage Therapy Program, including provisions of the law in which violations

carry a criminal penalty, was the focus of the information provided. The training concluded with the Chief Investigator and Senior Investigator presenting the officers with local massage advertisements, which demonstrated the issues and conduct presented during the training. The law enforcement officers and command staff expressed that the training was very valuable and provided them with law enforcement tools they were not aware they had. TDH investigators often collaborate with law enforcement officers during the investigative and enforcement process. In addition to assisting the police officers with their duties, the training will facilitate compliance with TDH regulations and enhance the working relationship between TDH and law enforcement. *For more information, contact Carol Vetter, Enforcement Director, at (512) 834-6650, ext. 2690 or e-mail [carol.vetter@TDH.state.tx.us](mailto:carol.vetter@TDH.state.tx.us).*



### **Regulatory Open Records Coordinators Organize.**

The open records coordinators in the regulatory programs established a workgroup for information sharing on October 17. The group consisted of nineteen coordinators from regulatory programs throughout TDH. The Public Information Coordinator for TDH was the guest speaker relating information about record processing, and legislative updates. The group will meet quarterly. Future speakers will be Hadassa Schloss, Open Record Coordinator for the General Services Commission and Robin Carter with the Office of General Counsel. Ms. Schloss is the expert for open record charges and Ms. Carter processes subpoenas for TDH. *For more information, contact Vyki Robbins at (512) 834-6650, ext. 2633 or e-mail [vyki.robbins@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:vyki.robbins@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Bureau of Vital Statistics (BVS).**

BVS launched its updated web site on October 12. The revised format is customer friendly, as it allows customers to data enter information directly on the computer screen. The main goal was to simplify pages to ensure that customers would have a quick and easy way to ascertain methods of ordering, costs of products, and length of time to receive products. The customer would have access to easy-to-read instructions in simple language on how to submit requests, and a more direct way to contact BVS about orders or to request specific forms. *For more information, contact Debra F. Owens, Bureau of Vital Statistics, at (512) 458-7366 or e-mail [debra.owens@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:debra.owens@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Emergency Care Attendant Training (ECAT) Program.**

The 77<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature recognized the increasing difficulty of recruiting and retaining Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel that is being faced by rural and underserved areas of this state. HB-2446, passed during the 2001 session, included a requirement that the department “provide or facilitate the provision of initial training for emergency care attendants, if the training is not available locally.” Classes may be as few as three students and must be presented at times and places convenient to them. Additionally, tuition is free to students who are willing to commit to work with their local EMS firm or first responder organization for at least a year following certification. Approximately \$250,000 was allocated for the program for fiscal years 2002. To date, the Bureau of Emergency Management has received over 50 inquiries regarding this training program and 13 applications. The first ECAT Program course was approved in October and is currently on going with approximately 20 students. *For more information, contact Jim Arnold, EMS Regulation, at (512) 834-6700 or e-mail [jim.arnold@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jim.arnold@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Emergency and Trauma Care in Texas Health Policy Forum.**

On October 26, the department participated in the Texas Institute for Health Policy Research forum on Emergency and Trauma Care. The four member panel included James

“Red” Duke, Jr., MD, Memorial Hermann Hospital; Mike Click, Administrator, Brownfield Regional Medical Center; Guy Clifton, MD, University of Texas Medical School, and Kathryn Perkins, Chief, Bureau of Emergency Management. The panelists presented information regarding the injury problem in Texas, the Texas trauma system, and current challenges being faced by rural and urban trauma care providers; and then answered questions from the audience, which included a number of legislative aides and other interested constituents. The Institute is planning to have a second forum early next year to explore potential solutions. *For more information, contact Kathryn C. Perkins, Bureau of Emergency Management, at (512) 834-6700 or e-mail [kathy.perkins@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:kathy.perkins@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Mold Remediation.**

The following items have been submitted to executive management or review and approval: Draft policy for treatment of mold contamination; Cost Estimate/procedures for remediation of Tower Building mold problems; and Contract specifications for weather stripping windows and office remediation. These items were taken to the Executive Team in May. Bureau of Resource Management (BRM) has received approval to proceed with the weather stripping phase. The proposed contract for weather-stripping the Tower Building will proceed in October. BRM has recently completed emergency major mold abatement in Lab Building A-900/1000. Initial indoor air tests have been conducted on request in the Moreton Building some minor mold remediation has been completed in the Service Building. BRM has entered into a contract to weather strip the windows in the Tower building. The contractor is proceeding with re-caulking and weather stripping. The next phase will be employee surveys and mold remediation in the Tower Building. *For more information, contact John Burlinson, BRM, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 7738 or e-mail [john.burlinson@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:john.burlinson@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Request for Proposal (RFP) for Telemedicine Pilot Projects.**

The Bureau of Women’s Health is developing a RFP for Telemedicine Pilot Projects in compliance with Rider 67, Article II of the General Appropriations Act. Rider 67 provides funds for two telemedicine projects to expand systems of telemedicine services for low-income women. Eligible applicants include urban county hospital districts and rural not-for-profit health facilities currently providing telemedicine services for low-income women. Approximately \$212,203 in FY2002 is expected to be available to fund one urban and one rural project. For the 12-month budget period, an urban county hospital district may be awarded a maximum of \$118,419 and a rural not-for-profit health facility may be awarded a maximum of \$93,784. The anticipated start date for the pilot projects is January 1, 2002. *For more information, contact Ms. Jan Hudson, Bureau of Women’s Health, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 2445 or e-mail [jan.hudson@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jan.hudson@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **The Division of Oral Health (DOH) proposes to develop dental pilot program to treat indigent children in border areas.**

HB2614 requires TDH to develop and implement a dental care pilot program for children living in border areas with family income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. No additional funding was appropriated for this pilot program. DOH will meet the requirements and conditions laid out in legislation using existing resources. The goal of the pilot is to serve up to 2,000 children. Services will be provided in selected underserved areas of Cameron and Hidalgo counties, with emphasis on the colonias, e.g., Cameron Park and Progreso. To implement the pilot, DOH will reactivate a TDH mobile dental unit; transfer a dentist position from Corpus Christi to Harlingen to manage the project; and partner with existing community resources, such as school nurses, promotoras, community centers, the Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health, the

Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the US-Mexico Border Health Association, the UT Office of Border Health, the TDH Office of Border Health, Texas Health Steps, and local dental providers to implement and evaluate the pilot. DOH expects to begin delivery of services by December 1, 2001. *For more information, contact Jerry Felkner, Division of Oral Health, at (512) 458-7323 or e-mail [jerry.felkner@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jerry.felkner@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Texas Health Steps dental.**

Effective October 1, Texas Health Steps dental provider fees were increased 13.5% for 33 frequently billed diagnostic, preventive, and therapeutic procedure codes. The 77<sup>th</sup> Legislature funded the TDH exceptional item in the amount of \$20 million general revenue funds and \$30 million in federal funds for fiscal years 2002 and 2003 to increase fees for the Texas Health Steps (THSteps) Dental Health Services Program. The Oral Health Services Advisory Committee, the Dental Best Practices Advisory Work Group, as well as current participating dentists, provided input to assist in the selection of the 33 most frequently billed procedures for which fees were increased. In addition to the increased fees, the THSteps Dental Services Program also raised the reimbursement maximum on restorative services for a primary tooth and for radiographs. The Program anticipates that higher fees will result in an expanded dental provider base for THSteps clients. *For more information, contact Jerry Felkner, Division of Oral Health, at (512) 458-7323 or e-mail [jerry.felkner@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jerry.felkner@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Fluoridation Project.**

The Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission (TNRCC) granted a blanket exception for compliance with TNRCC requirements to TDH for any public water system receiving technical assistance and/or funding for fluoridation projects that comply with TDH Texas Drinking Water Fluoridation Project fluoridation system design specifications. Such coordination and cooperation between TDH and TNRCC facilitates and expedites installation of fluoridations systems contracted by TDH. *For more information, contact Jerry Felkner, Division of Oral Health, at (512) 458-7323 or e-mail [jerry.felkner@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jerry.felkner@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Children with Special Health Care Needs Program (CSHCN).**

Awaiting list was instituted for Children with Special Health Care Needs Program (CSHCN) Services on October 5, because of reduced CSHCN funding and higher than expected expenditure projections for Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003. SB374, which removed diagnosis-specific medical eligibility and expanded services, permits the program to create waiting lists to remain within budget. New applicants who are financially and medically eligible but whose application is postmarked October 5 or later are placed on the list. As of October 17, there were 23 persons on the list. The program also has separate waiting lists in the regions for family support services. There were approximately 150 persons on the regional waiting lists as of September 1, 2001. HHSC and legislative leadership were briefed on the waiting list in mid-September. *For more information contact Susan Penfield, CSHCN Division, at (512) 458-7111, ext. 3104 or e-mail [susan.penfield@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:susan.penfield@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **General Sanitation Division Provides Information on Least Toxic Pest Control for Colonias in El Paso.**

Staff of the General Sanitation have been contacted by the Office of Border Health and the Secretary of State's Office requesting that seminars on least toxic methods to control household pests be presented to the residents of colonias in El Paso, the local health department and the Regional Health Department personnel. Staff were contacted because

of the TDH Forum on IPM Pest Control for the homeowner that appeared on the TDH Blue Board. Residents of the colonias have been using methyl parathion that was purchased on the streets of Juarez, Mexico to treat their homes for cockroaches, ants and other household pests. In addition, staff are presently conducting a research project to demonstrate cockroach control with least toxic materials to use in conjunction with the seminar. The least toxic materials in this case is boric acid. The seminar is scheduled for February 2002 in El Paso. *For more information, contact Roy G. Burton, Vector Control Branch, at (512) 834-6635 or e-mail [roy.burton@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:roy.burton@tdh.state.tx.us).*

## Regional Updates

---

### Public Health Region 1

---



#### **Anthrax Concerns.**

While there have been no reported cases of anthrax exposure in Region 1, public awareness and concerns about anthrax have been peaking due to the news of the anthrax exposures on the East Coast. During the month of October, regional epidemiologists have received almost 40 telephone calls from citizens worried about either anthrax or suspicious packages. They have also responded to two media requests for information or interviews. *For more information, contact Barry Wilson, at (806) 767-0496, or e-mail [barry.wilson@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:barry.wilson@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **New Clinic Location.**

The TDH clinic in Pampa has moved to a new location, where they are now housed rent-free in partnership with Harvest House, a community-based outreach facility owned by Pampa's Trinity Fellowship Church. In addition to providing treatment and counseling for individuals with sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, the clinic also hosts bi-monthly children's immunization clinics. *For more information, contact Carolyn Hall, at (806) 665-4696, or e-mail [carolyn.hall@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:carolyn.hall@tdh.state.tx.us).*

---

### Public Health Region 2/3

---



#### **VAERS Death Investigations.**

Staff is cooperating with the TDH Immunization Division and other agencies investigating the deaths of two children after vaccine administration. One child was administered vaccine that included the MMR by a private physician in Denton County. The child developed viral encephalopathy and died in an Arkansas hospital a few days later. Viral encephalopathy has been observed rarely in the past as an adverse reaction to the MMR vaccine. The second child, a 13-month-old, was administered DTaP, IPV, Hib and Prevnar vaccines, and immune globulin for hepatitis A exposure, by a TDH field office. For the next 36 hours she had no known complications besides some fever, but was found in full arrest in her bed, and was pronounced dead at the emergency room. The Tarrant County Medical Examiner is still investigating the cause of death, but has ruled out SIDS, trauma, airway obstruction, and meningococcal disease. Because of the timing of the onset of symptoms, deaths such as this are not known to be associated with the injections this child received. *For more information, contact Brad Walsh, at (817) 264-4551 or e-mail [brad.walsh@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:brad.walsh@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Meningococcal Case.**

Epidemiology and CORE staff worked with several different news organizations in the Dallas area in the aftermath of a high-profile meningococcal case. The patient, a 19-year-old college student, had attended a sorority party on the University of North Texas campus a few hours before illness onset. Because of fears about transmission at the crowded party, university health officials issued broad recommendations for antibiotic prophylaxis, causing hundreds of students and others to seek antibiotics from student health services and area hospitals. Media reporters following the story sought interviews from TDH staff about the incident, the disease, and the correct recommendations for antibiotics. *For more information, contact Brad Walsh, at (817) 264-4551 or e-mail [brad.walsh@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:brad.walsh@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **The demolition of the Hyatt Regency West Hotel at DFW International Airport.**

As the building imploded, the large cloud of dust generated began to drift in a westerly direction towards Colleyville in the Tarrant County area. To assure that asbestos fibers were not released and the public exposed, inspectors from the PHR 2/3 office set up pumps and sampled air quality prior to implosion and during the passage of the dust cloud. *For more information, contact Ken McBride, (817) 264-4683 or e-mail [ken.mcBride@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:ken.mcBride@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Rabies reporting.**

Zoonosis Control facilitated testing of a skunk that had bitten an 11-year-old boy after he chased and caught the skunk. The skunk tested negative. During the year 2000 PHR 2/3 Zoonosis Control had a reported total of 381 animals infected with rabies. Since October 1, there have been 25 reported cases of rabies infected animals, 23 rabies-infected skunks with only one reported rabies infected cow and one rabies infected fox for a total of 390 reported cases of rabies-infected animals to-date for the year 2001. *For more information, contact Connie Lindley, at (817) 264-4921 or e-mail [connie.lindley@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:connie.lindley@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **West Nile Virus testing.**

PHR 2/3 Zoonosis Control arranged for the shipment of three crows, one hawk, and one blue jay from Tarrant, Dallas, and Collin Counties for West Nile Virus testing. Zoonosis Control enlisted the Dallas, Fort Worth, and Abilene Zoos into the West Nile Virus Surveillance Program. There were six media contacts this month concerning West Nile Virus, rabies in bats and skunks, and anthrax in animals. Zoonosis Control personnel are also involved with answering anthrax questions from concerned citizens. *For more information, contact Connie Lindley, at (817) 264-4921 or e-mail [connie.lindley@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:connie.lindley@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Health Fair.**

PHR 2/3 participated in a health fair held at the Muslim Community Center for Human Services in Arlington on September 29, at the Dar El-Eman Islamic Center. The health fair was co-sponsored by the Islamic Council of Tarrant County. Birth Defects Monitoring, Immunizations, and Tuberculosis Elimination were on hand to provide health information and literature to over 300 people in attendance. Participants included 40 to 50 Muslim physicians who offered free physical, dental and eye exams to adults and children attending the health fair. Volunteer nurses provided blood sugar and cholesterol screenings. Other community agencies involved included MHMR, DPRS, and the Red Cross who offered red, white and blue ribbons. Many, including those in traditional Arab garb, wore ribbons. The Mayor of Arlington, the Honorable Elzie Odom, mingled with the mostly Muslim crowd and read a proclamation thanking the

Muslim community for helping others. Humanity and diversity were on full display at this mosque event. *For more information, contact Cindy Bolton, at (817) 264-4571 or e-mail [cindy.bolton@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:cindy.bolton@tdh.state.tx.us).*

---

## Public Health Region 4 & 5 North

---



### **Non-Expo Show.**

The Public Health Regions 4/5 North Non-Expo Show was held on Tuesday, October 30 with Charlie O'Brien and Mary Brewer (both with HIV/STD Program) serving as quiz show hosts. The regional staff gathered in Tyler at the Tyler Junior College Regional Training and Development Center campus and enjoyed a day of fun, fellowship, and education. The Non-Expo was a result of a working group, which met last spring to study the last Texas Department of Health Survey of organizational Excellence (SOE). Their goal was to let the SOE guide them to a project that would benefit both the regional staff members and their constituents within the region. The working group settled on a desire to enhance communications within the Region. During brainstorming sessions, the consensus was to learn more about what each program does and the services it offers to the citizens of East Texas. This was accomplished using the game show concept featuring questions specifically about the regional programs and mission. Dr. Charles Bell, Executive Deputy Commissioner of TDH; Sharon Brewer, Chief of the TDH Bureau of Human Resources; Anthony Mills from the Employees' Retirement System and Marilyn Galambush of Citistreet were the special guest stars at the event. Each of them presented important information to the group. In addition to gaining information from the quiz questions and from the guest stars, the contestants were able to bid on some great prizes with auctioneer Dr. Maureen Weber (Dental Health Program) presiding. Members of the Non-Expo Show planning committee were Brett Hart, Sharon Flournoy, Susan Bennett, Carlisza Frazier, Paula Hughes, Cecil Fambrough, Shirley Mayfield, Joyce Vanginault, Kevan Bauer, Rosie Rogers, and James Wright. *For more information, contact James Wright, Zoonosis Control Program, at (903) 533-5243 or e-mail [james.wright@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:james.wright@tdh.state.tx.us).*

---

## Public Health Region 6 & 5 South

---



### **Bioterrorism.**

In response to recent terrorist events involving anthrax, regional staff have partnered with local health departments, local health authorities, and emergency room administrators to strengthen communication links and provide information to fortify our defenses against a possible biological or chemical attack. Regional staff has also provided counsel to local law enforcement and have worked to educate members of the general public concerning

appropriate precautions to take in handling suspicious mail and envelopes. *For more information, contact Brian Rutherford, at (713) 767-3010 or e-mail [brian.rutherford@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:brian.rutherford@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **Indigent Health Care Conference.**

County Indigent Health Care Program (CIHCP) Resource Coordinator, recruited 17 different state and federal agency representatives for a Resource Table Exhibit at the 2001 Indigent Health Care Conference to allow attendees “one on one” time with experts in other sources of health and human services. He also organized and moderated a panel discussion on county inmate care and CIHCP. *For more information, contact Sam Cooper, CIHCP, at (713) 767-3222, or e-mail [sam.cooper@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:sam.cooper@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **Tuberculosis (TB)/HIV/STD Joint Outreach.**

Regional staff from the TB program and the HIV/STD program joined forces to provide Outreach Services outside a local nightclub in Rosenberg in Fort Bend County in an area where the risk for TB, HIV, and STD is especially high. Staff performed skin tests and took blood samples from some of the patrons to be tested for communicable diseases. *For more information, contact Syed Haidry, TB program Manager, at (713) 767-3431 or e-mail [syed.haidry@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:syed.haidry@tdh.state.tx.us).*

---

### **Public Health Region 7**

---



#### **Prevention Counseling and Partner Elicitation (PCPE).**

A PCPE training course was presented October 9-12, for HIV/STD prevention service providers. The course was hosted by Region 7 HIV/STD Program and facilitated by the Texas HIV Connection. The course is a requirement for TDH HIV/STD PCPE contract staff and recommended for Disease Intervention Specialists. Sixteen participants were in attendance, eleven representing Region 7 contractors and five representing other regions across the state. *For more information, contact Jennifer Schneider, HIV/STD Program, at (254) 778-6744 or e-mail [jennifer.schneider@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jennifer.schneider@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **The Communicable Disease (CD) Connection Newsletter.**

The fourth quarter edition of the CD Connection was distributed to regional immunizations, HIV/STD, disease surveillance, and tuberculosis customers October 15. TDH Region 7 Communicable Disease (CD) Division publishes the newsletter quarterly. The focus is on expanding public health networks by building and strengthening community-based partnerships. Region 7 CD staff, local health departments, community-based organizations and service providers submit articles for publication. *For more information, contact Jennifer Schneider, at (254) 778-6744 or e-mail [jennifer.schneider@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:jennifer.schneider@tdh.state.tx.us).*



#### **Region 7 employees respond to Anthrax concerns.**

In response to phone calls from concerned individuals, law enforcement, fire departments, physicians and hospitals, TDH Region 7 formed a Bioterrorism Response Team and a Response Support Team to manage the flow of information and to respond to questions and concerns of callers. An interim information document was assembled to distill the overwhelming amount of information coming out of the CDC and provide a list of contact numbers and websites for regional team members and local health department partners in the region. This document incorporates and supplements official guidance being published out of the Office of the State Epidemiologist, TDH. Calls are being received and logged by Regional Administration then routed to Response Support Team

members for guidance and resolution. Regional staff are also visiting with local hospitals/emergency departments and making presentations to medical and emergency response personnel to increase local community capacity to deal with the deluge of concerns from the public. *For more information, contact Brett Marsh, at (254) 778-6744, ext. 2102 or e-mail [brett.marsh@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:brett.marsh@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Innovative solutions are used to alleviate PHR 7 Retail Food Program staff shortage.**

To better meet the inspection needs in this area, 4 Meat Safety Assurance, 3 General Sanitation and 2 Milk & Dairy inspectors have been trained and are now being utilized to help carry out the retail food mission. We are working with the central office retail food review staff to inspect facilities in state buildings within Travis County that are not inspected by the Austin-Travis County Health Department. This will help the employees retain or expand their skills and help us protect consumers within PHR-7. *For more information contact Oran Buckner, Consumer Health Protection, at (254) 778-6744, ext. 2710 or e-mail [oran.buckner@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:oran.buckner@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Rabies Prevention Program.**

On October 3, the Zoonosis Control Program presented a three-hour program on rabies prevention in Georgetown. The program was hosted by the Williamson County Public Health District recognition of the need for accurate information on rabies transmission and animal bite risk assessment. Animal control officers from the cities of Leander, Georgetown, Cedar Park and Round Rock attended. Other attendees included infection control nurses, public health nurses, school nurses, pest control operators, school district and city risk managers, environmental health officials, and code enforcement officers from the largest communities and school districts in Williamson County. *For more information, contact Beverlee E. Nix, at (254) 778-6744, ext. 2450 or e-mail [beverlee.nix@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:beverlee.nix@tdh.state.tx.us).*

---

## **Public Health Region 9/10**

---



### **Bioterrorism.**

The Regional Bioterrorism Response Team participated in a staged Bioterrorism exercise in Midland/Odessa. The team developed and is delivering community presentations on public health response to bioterrorism. The team is promoting response information to area County Medical Societies. *For more information, contact Dr. Evret Newman, PHR 9/10, at (915) 834-7782 or e-mail [evret.newman@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:evret.newman@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **US/Mexico Border Health Commission Meetings.**

The Regional Office and the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission hosted community meetings to develop strategies to address priority border health problems. One of the meetings focused on developing a binational tuberculosis case management models to ensure TB treatment completion. Meetings were attended by Executive Deputy Commissioner and Secretaries of Health from the U.S. and Mexico. *For more information, contact Dr. Miguel A. Escobedo, Regional Director PHR 9/10, at (915) 834-7680 or e-mail [miguel.escobedo@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:miguel.escobedo@tdh.state.tx.us).*



### **Tobacco Prevention.**

The Regional Office of Tobacco Prevention sponsored a Youth Tobacco Prevention Summit. El Paso's Mayor Ray Caballero, a strong advocate of Smoking Cessation, was

the keynote speaker. For more information, contact Rebecca Zima, Office of Tobacco Prevention and Control, at (915) 834-7 or e-mail [rebecca.zima@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:rebecca.zima@tdh.state.tx.us).

---

## Public Health Region 11

---



### **Office of Border Health Conducted Economically Distressed Areas Program (EDAP)/Cameron and Maverick Counties.**

On October 10, The Office of Border Health conducted EDAP nuisance findings in fifteen colonias in the Santa Rosa, Cameron County area for water and wastewater funding as requested by the Texas Water Development Board. Approximately 479 existing households received water and wastewater services as a result of our findings. Staff from the Laredo Office of Border Health assisted public health region 8 in conducting nuisance findings in the Eagle Pass, Maverick County area. Approximately 500 existing households received water and wastewater services as a result of our findings. For more information, contact Ramiro Gonzales, Border Health, PHR 11, at (956) 423-0130, or e-mail [ramiro.gonzales@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:ramiro.gonzales@tdh.state.tx.us).



### **Bioterrorism / Congressman Ortiz, Harlingen, Texas.**

On October 20, Representative Solomon Ortiz hosted a public meeting. Regional Director presented an outline of the role of TDH in bioterrorism. The needs for south Texas included a regional laboratory such as South Texas Health Care Center, improving the Health Alert Network to include all counties and binational sister city health departments, and automated reporting from medical practitioners. The McAllen postal inspector also presented a four-stage process for responses to different risk levels of mail threats that we developed at previous meetings with the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), Department of Public Safety, and local first responders. For more information, contact Dr. Brian Smith, PHR 11, at (956) 423-0130, or e-mail [brian.smith@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:brian.smith@tdh.state.tx.us).



### **Children Health Insurance Plan Regional Advisory Committee (CHIP RAC)/Chamber of Commerce in Alice, Texas.**

On October 29, the Regional Director chaired the meeting. New members were recommended for the vacant positions on the committee and a recommendation to change the By-Laws to read; 3-year staggered terms with 1/3 of the members rotating out every year were made. Preliminary discussion concerning the Primary Care Case Management (PCCM) rollout scheduled for next Fall of 2002 took place. Possibly the new PCCM RAC will be joined with the CHIP RAC. Statutory requirements were the same for both RAC's but operationally, there were some remaining questions. Director for the City of Laredo Health Department suggested setting up sub-committees throughout Region 11 to provide input and representation. Staff from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (THHSC) reported that the goal set in the beginning of the program of enrolling 428,000 children by September of 2001 had been met. The total number of applications as of October 1 for Region 11 (which includes 19 counties) was at 98,243. The THHSC and TDH have undergone major organizational changes in combining both the Medicaid and CHIP programs stemmed mainly from Medicaid Simplification, Senate Bill 43 and will be rolled out effective January of 2002. For more information, contact Carol Cornelison, PHR 11, at (956) 423-0130, or e-mail [carol.cornelison@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:carol.cornelison@tdh.state.tx.us).



### **Live Oak Health Department Meeting/George West, Texas.**

On October 30, Regional Director met with the local health department directors from Region 11 at Live Oak Health Department. Items for discussion included bioterrorism preparedness, evaluating public health infrastructure to implement the 10 essential public health services and updates from each of the local health departments. *For more information, contact Dr. Brian Smith, PHR 11, at (956) 423-0130, or e-mail [brian.smith@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:brian.smith@tdh.state.tx.us).*